

In Loco Parentis

Cole Olson

In loco Parentis translates from Latin into 'in the place of the parent'. In terms of its relevance to schools and teaching, this is a term that describes the responsibility teachers have to their students after the parents have left them in their care. As teachers are responsible for looking after students for a large portion of their growing years, they become responsible for teaching students both the lessons and curriculum put forward by the provincial government and inadvertently how to become caring, productive and independent members of society. In a sense, they become another parent to the students they guide, and as such take on the responsibility of performing the most appropriate and guardian-like actions in the event of a situation or crisis.

As In Loco Parentis states, it is up to the teacher to make the necessary decisions that are in the very best interest of the students when their parents are not there to make it for them. This is a very large responsibility, as the child you are educating is now also under your legal protection, and every decision you chose to take regarding their well being will have either a positive or negative consequence. If a teacher is ever put in a difficult situation and must make a choice that will affect one or more of their student's wellbeing, they should take the most appropriate action that they believe a parent would take. I personally cannot imagine what I would do if placed in such an extreme situation as I do not know the feeling of having my own children to protect and look after, but I would hope that the values of In Loco Parentis would help me to make the best choice possible for my students.

An example of this concept at work could be how a teacher would handle a student who brought a weapon to school. Just as a parent would have to make a decision about how to safely deal with the situation without putting any children in harm's way, the teacher would become responsible for ensuring the safety of themselves, the student with the weapon and the rest of their class. The decisions they make to ensure this safety should be those that the parent would undertake if they had been there for the situation. Like parents, teachers also have access to a number of support systems that will help them make the hard decisions if need be.